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FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9118
INFO RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1029
RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS

UNCLAS COTONOU 001242

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STATE FOR AF/W:DBANKS, AF/PD:LBEDICHEK

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PROV PHUM KPAO BN

SUBJECT: BENIN: OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER AND OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT AT ODDS

¶1. Following an interview on the President's Malaria Initiative (septel), Ephrem Dossavi-Messy, a reporter for the official GOB newspaper La Nation, was asked why there had been no coverage in La Nation of President Boni Yayi's recent trip to the United States, which included a meeting with POTUS. Dossavi-Messy replied that the office of the Presidency had requested that La Nation designate one reporter and one photographer who would be permanently assigned to the Presidency and would accompany him on all official travel. La Nation had explained that it had a policy of rotating its reporters and staff and was not willing to change this. As a result, nobody from La Nation had accompanied the President of Benin on his recent trip to the United States, and there was virtually no mention of it.

¶2. Comment: Dossavi-Messy also said that the office of the Presidency appeared to pick friends and relatives of the POB and his close associates who worked for other newspapers to accompany him on his travels. In fact, reporting in all newspapers, as well as on electronic media, on the POB's trip to Benin was extremely sparse.
End Comment.

HOLTZAPPLE